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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and are not rendered obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. **If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues, or believes that some or all of the claims are not in condition for allowance, the applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned to schedule a telephone Examiner Interview before any further actions on the merits.**

The applicant will now address each of the issues raised in the outstanding Office Action.

Objections

Claims 69 and 70 are objected to because of minor informalities. Claim 69 has been amended to replace "...the priority..." with "...a priority..." based on the Examiner's helpful suggestion. Claim 70 has been amended to replace "...that..." with "...higher than...". This correction is supported, for example, by page 37 of the specification. Therefore, the applicant respectfully requests that these objections be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 65 and 77 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,850,271 ("the Ichikawa patent"). Since claims 65 and 77 have been canceled, this ground of rejection is moot.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 66, 71 and 78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Ichikawa patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,011,547 ("the Shiotani patent"). Since claims 66, 71 and 78 have been canceled, this ground of rejection is moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 67-70 and 72-76 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 67 has been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of base claim 65 (now canceled) and intervening claim 66 (now canceled). Therefore, claim 67, as amended, is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 68 has been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of base claim 65 (now canceled) and intervening claim 66 (now canceled). Therefore, claim 68, as amended, is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 69 has been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of base claim 65 (now canceled) and intervening claim 66 (now canceled). Therefore, claim 69, as amended, is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 70 has been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of base claim 65 (now canceled). There was no intervening claim. Therefore, claim 70, as amended, is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 72 has been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of base claim 71 (now canceled). There was no intervening claim. Therefore, claim 72, as amended, is now in condition for allowance. Further, since claims 73-76 directly or indirectly depend from claim 72, they are also in condition for allowance.

As can be appreciated from the foregoing, all of the claims are in condition for allowance.

Entry of Amendments

Since the amendments merely cancel claims or place claims into condition for allowance without raising any new issues, they should be entered.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the applicant requests that the Examiner pass this application to issue.

Any arguments made in this amendment pertain **only** to the specific aspects of the invention **claimed**. Any claim amendments or cancellations, and any arguments, are made **without prejudice to, or disclaimer of**, the applicant's right to seek patent protection of any unclaimed (e.g., narrower, broader, different) subject matter, such as by way of a continuation or divisional patent application for example.

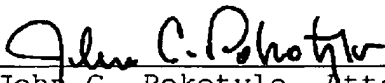
Since the applicant's remarks, amendments, and/or filings with respect to the Examiner's objections and/or rejections are sufficient to overcome these objections and/or rejections, the applicant's silence as to assertions by the Examiner in the Office Action and/or to certain facts or conclusions that may be implied by objections and/or rejections in the Office Action (such as, for example, whether a reference constitutes prior art, whether references have been properly combined or modified, whether dependent claims are separately patentable, etc.) is not a concession by the applicant that such assertions and/or implications are accurate, and that all requirements for an objection and/or a rejection have been met. Thus, the applicant reserves the right to analyze and dispute any such assertions and implications in the future.

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Respectfully submitted,

July 7, 2009

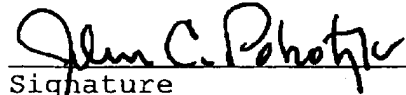

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July 7, 2009
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